ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH CLUBS AND FITNESS CENTRES

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Department of Health

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INTRODUCTION

As noted in A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians[1], there is a strong relationship between health and the physical activity component of lifestyle. Benefits, in being physically active are many, which include increased aerobic capacity, decreased stress, a general sense of well-being and the modification of lifestyle factors.

Paramount to all the above benefits is the quality of the fitness facilities and the protection of the health of the users of such services within the Province of Nova Scotia. To this end, the following guidelines have been developed to aid the operators and the public in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

1.0 CONSTRUCTION

1.1 General Construction

Facilities and equipment shared should meet federal, provincial and municipal building, health, fire and sanitation codes for quality, safety and construction.

1.2 Sewage

a) All sanitary sewage must be discharged to a central sewage disposal system approved by the Department of Health and Fitness or to a private sewage disposal system for which a permit has been issued by the Board of Health having jurisdiction.

b) If the Health Club or Fitness Center is situated in an older building for which no record of recommended permit was issued, the operation is permissible if there is no apparent malfunction of the on-site sewage disposal system.

1.3 Water Supply

a) The owner of every Health Club or Fitness Center shall ensure that there is, for its occupants, a sufficient supply of potable water under sufficient pressure which meets the requirements of the Department of Health and Fitness for bacteriological and chemical quality.

b) If the water is obtained from a source other than a municipal supply it must be approved by the Department of Health and Fitness.

(c) Water fountains with approved mouth guards should be provided.

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1 A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians, National Health and Welfare, 1974.

1.0 CONSTRUCTION (con't)

1.4 Solid Waste Disposal

a) Containers

1. All garbage and waste should be kept in containers that are constructed of durable metal or other approved type of material.

2. All containers should be provided with tight-fitting lids or covers and should be kept covered when stored or not in continuous use.

3. After being emptied, each container should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

4. There should be a sufficient number of containers to hold all of the garbage and waste which accumulates between periods of removal from the premises.

1.5 Insect and Rodent Control

a) All openings to the outer air should be effectively protected against the entrance of flies or other flying insects.

b) All openings to the outside should be effectively protected against the entrance of rodents.

c) All pest control should be carried out by a licensed pest control operator.

1.6 Plumbing and Toilet Facilities

a) All plumbing shall meet the requirements of the National Plumbing Code as adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia.

b) At least two (2) toilet areas should be provided for wet and dry traffic for each sex.

1.0 CONSTRUCTION (con't)

1.6 Plumbing and Toilet Facilities (con't)

c) Each toilet area shall be provided with

- a basin for each toilet unit;
- an adequate supply of potable hot and cold water;
- a constant supply of liquid or powdered soap in a suitable dispenser;
- clean single service towels in a suitable dispenser; or air dryers;
- a suitable receptacle for wet towels and waste material.

1.7 Shower Areas

a) Shower areas should have a sufficient number of showers to provide for peak hours. The recommended ratio is one shower head for every ten clients on the premises.

b) Showers should provide a continuous flow of hot and cold water with temperature controls on the hot water line to prevent scalding.

c) The floor should have a non-slip surface, curved at the walls and sloped to individual floor drains.

d) If possible a drying area should be provided between the showers and locker room areas.

e) Shower curtains should be removed and laundered or replaced on a regular basis to prevent mould growth.

f) Liquid body soap in suitable dispensers should be provided in shower stall areas.

g) If towels are provided, single use should be assured, and such towels should be properly laundered after each use.

h) Adequate storage space for clean and dirty linen in separate compartments should be provided.

2.0 GENERAL FACILITIES DESIGN

2.1 First Aid

All Health Clubs or Fitness Centres should meet at least the minimal first aid requirements as outlined in Appendix "A".

2.2 Equipment

a) For all equipment adequate safety controls should be required.

b) Equipment should meet any relevant standards and regulation (eg. Hazardous Products Act; Canadian Standards Association; Medical Devices Regulations of the Food and Drug Act).

c) The room in which such equipment is arranged should be of sufficient size to permit equipment to be used without danger or inconvenience to the users.

d) The equipment room should be well-lighted and temperature controlled for year round use.

e) All equipment should be maintained to the manufacturer's specifications, and used in a manner consistent with the equipment's described purpose.

2.3 Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs and Spas

All swimming pools, hot tubs and spas shall meet the Department of Health and Fitness Guidelines pertaining to the operation of Hydro Therapy Pools, Hubbard Tanks, Whirlpools, Single Patient Hydro Therapy tanks 1987 and the Department of Health and Fitness Guidelines for Swimming Pools Province of Nova Scotia (1987).

2.4 Sun Lamps

If sun lamps are installed they should at least meet the following standards because of the danger of ultra violet lights:

A. Separate shielded area
B. Set focal distance
C. Accurate timing device with warning signal
D. Goggles or eye protectors should be provided
E. Prominent sign advising users

2.0 GENERAL FACILITIES DESIGN (con't)

2.5 Ventilation

a) Adequate mechanical ventilation in proper working order should be provided in order to remove condensation and odors to the outside atmosphere.

b) All ventilation ducts, air conditioners, fans and air exchangers should be properly cleaned and maintained dust free at all times.

2.6 Maintenance

a) All rooms (floors, walls, ceilings), equipment and appliances shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition at all times.

b) All wash basins and toilet facilities should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition to include the application of suitable disinfectant.

c) Tanning beds should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

2.7 Lighting

a) Lighting shall be provided and maintained so as to meet National Building Code Standards as adopted in the Nova Scotia Building Code.

b) A minimum of 30 FC (323Lux) should be provided for cleaning purposes.

2.8 Food

If food is prepared or served for human consumption on the premises, the food storage, preparation, transport and dispensing areas shall meet the standards of the Nova Scotia Regulations Respecting Eating Establishments.

REFERENCES

Guidelines for Fitness and Health Clubs. National Health and Welfare, 1980.

Various Guidelines and Regulations, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Fitness

APPENDIX "A"

PROPOSED FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS

Based on the format used in the Guidelines for Fitness Centres and Health Clubs, the following first aid requirements are proposed.

MINIMAL

Personnel

All program staff have the minimum of the Safety-Oriented First-Aid Certificate St. John's Ambulance (8-hour SOFA course), plus Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, renewable every three years.

Supplies and Equipment

On site provision of:

1) a Type A first aid kit (note: these kits are variable by province as to content)
2) a written first-aid/emergency protocol, and key telephone numbers.

Facilities

On-site provision of small office or space that can be used for rendering first aid and allowing the subject to lie down; and access to a telephone.

DESIRABLE

Personnel

All program staff have the minimum of a Standard FIrst-Aid Certificate (16-hour course), plus Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, renewable every three (3) years.

Supplies and Equipment

On-site provision of:

1) a B (next level) first-aid kit
2) additional supplies (e.g. for exercise-related problems)
3) a written first aid/emergency protocol, and key telephone numbers.

Facilities

On-site provision of a designated first-aid room (minimal 6'x8') with a cot/examination table, sink, telephone.

An emergency telephone and primary (or field/secondary) first-aid kits in the exercise area, if not adjacent to first-aid room (see above).

APPENDIX "A"
PROPOSED FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS

OPTIONAL

Personnel	1) Advanced First-Aid Certificate 2) Courses in the management of minor exercise-related problems.
Supplies and Equipment	No options; requisites identified in Minimal and Desirable above.
Facilities	No options; requisites identified in Minimal and Desirable above.

If medical, physiotherapy and/or other related services are offered, then medical kits, specialized resuscitative equipment and definitive treatment aids should be provided. Since this goes beyond the mandate of the guideline, further study would be required.